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# outposts

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## JAMES BROCKWAY

### *Dam in the Dordogne*

**B**EAUTIFUL the river, disobedient to the laws of simple man, who sees in the dead straight line the natural, obvious course between two points, it flows by a stubborn logic of its own: heads northwards when the destination's south, winds to the west in search of eastern seas; and though a servant, tolerant its tides of barge and steamer, the impudence of tugs, bearing away the tin cans, suicides, tamed, you might think, yet always capable of rebellion: ruthless now to demonstrate by crumpled dyke, burst dam, farm under flood who's master still, if only he's the will.

Here, too, in the glistening fastness of this gorge where no one lives, still habitat of birds (the road itself become a yellow snake) where pride has raised this insolent, white dam, here, too, refractory: dwindling in drought to a trickle of itself, refusing to comply—shrinking, it seems, on purpose, to reveal what's been accomplished here: the valley all awry, mad trees that stand with streamers in their hair, hut with its roof torn off, its brains washed out; a new and primal world of mud and slime made by him who crawled up from the slime.

And thus, though harnessed, made the instrument of a will to power, yet still, in essence, free: still patient to fulfil a double role, to serve—and to admonish, disobey.

*Holland*



## NOEL WELCH

### *Advent*

THAT Heaven should be hid is normal. Singular  
Any part of me should for one instant  
Be its hiding place. Yet for eight long months  
I've carried  
Everything I see and things I shall never see  
Because I carry Him. At first I scarcely  
Dared to move, but a shell suffers the whole weight  
Of the sea and the greenest pod is open  
To the thrashing of the wind till the very moment  
It is rent, so I trusting walked and grew  
Heavier with Heaven at every step. I reach  
From hill to hill, break out of rocks, enter  
Flowers and trees and go fourfooted with the beasts  
For, until He is strong enough to bear  
His weak new state, I must bear with him. But how  
Shall I survive the hour Heaven looks up  
At me without perhaps any recognition,  
Demanding still only this hard faith  
And the usual needs of a new born child.  
Already, the hands that run along this plank  
Are not wholly mine nor are these feet that cross  
And recross the floor. As often as I  
Replace these dwindling candles with others  
Tall and white, that cast before me their clean  
Favouring shadows, I am myself renewed.  
But I shall always link the sharp smell

Of fresh felled wood with this time of waiting  
To cradle Him who cradles all the world,  
That I already cradle prively  
But must bring forth without strife or falsehood  
Or one concession save those I make to His

Own unbelievable abiding self.  
Meanwhile, I eat and sleep and sometimes laugh  
At my own partridge shape nought can now disguise  
And at the cock's abrupt and dazzling cry  
Weep for a nameless fear as women will.

## DONALD THOMAS

### *A Point in Time*

A BELL'S note stuns the moment dead,  
No movement measured in its span;  
The taper of each central beam  
Drums a mute rhythm of this stroke.  
The ripple of the bell spreads out  
To chart each fan of stone; fills in  
All space round solid shapes; freezes  
Their fluid pattern in its sound.  
Columns and domes stand clear and fast,  
Caught firm in this continued drone,  
Till statues and bright walls resume  
A shadow dance of sun and stone.  
When bell falls and the wheel returns  
A tower's depth its rope drops slack:  
The note is snuffed out as each wall  
Sends its denial spinning back.



## PETER LITTLE

### *In Italy*

SURELY beneath Italian sun the earth turns slower.  
Its grains lie lazy, lapped by the yellow flood,  
Like morning lovers close in their night's won warmth  
Heedless that tick of day begins with clinking milkmen  
And noise of noon shows colour in the bud.

Surely beneath Italian stars the heart beats stronger.  
Day's fears lie emptied like our crumpled clothes;  
An ancient magic makes us trust our dreams.  
Under those onion-headed towers that hold the night up  
All private towers succeed, or so it seems.

## ROY FULLER

### *Chinese*

SLIPPING on peach blossom in their drunkenness,  
The Chinese groped for brushes to indite  
A last epistle to their friend. At night  
They started awake and saw the empty dress  
Thrown on a painted screen—itsself depicting  
Some bridge where civil servants say farewell  
When leaving for the distant capital.  
And in the sober morning, contradicting  
The flood of tears, the poignant characters,  
A little housemaid, hitherto unseen,  
Carries the steaming tea towards the green  
Willow that shades the customary chairs.  
This gown is far from empty: should it climb  
Idly beneath, one's hand will find twin boughs  
That bear divided fruit, furred as a mouse,  
As though the peach had come before its time.

## JOHN HEATH-STUBBS

### *Zante*

**T**HEN from the pangs of the Aegean storm we burst,  
The crystals of the weather formed once more  
Around the sun's gold seeds. And, naked as  
That green-haired century of Nereus' daughters,  
Promontories and islands in procession  
Breasting the sea's clear vintage. So for days  
The far-shot arrows of a god beat down  
On grey of rock, green-grey of olive leaves,  
Blue-green and dazzle of moving waters; so that the heart  
Stands still, and the brain aches, and the eye falters.

The centaur is standing just behind the hill:  
The pipes are, but for a moment, hushed.

Aeolian and Ionian names. . . . And now, Zante,  
To starboard rising—but not voiceless,  
Island of poets and exiles!—You, Foscolo,  
And you, Kalvos, whom the East Wind of freedom  
Swept to that holy city of the Celts,  
Where I go home; but now recall  
The Cyprus gaols, the gallows, and the guns—and I  
Cannot without shame, cannot without tears  
Honour this beauty.

NOTE: The poets Andreas Kalvos and Ugo Foscolo were both natives of the Ionian island of Zante. The phrase "holy city of the Celts" is applied to London in a poem by Kalvos.



## SHIRLEY BRIDGES

### *Napoleon's Corsica: Corsica's Napoleon*

IT was not a bad place to be born in:  
Bare hills climbed up from the main street  
And there a boy could walk his long dreams  
Over the hot miles, bitter cistus sweet.

Bells tell the hours twice over all the day  
Time is on an island and cannot get away.

He wandered wide: how could he stay at home  
With windows shuttered on the cornered streets  
In close provincial pride: nothing can change,  
No stranger ever comes, no one competes,

And history locked the door, for what could come  
From nobody's land, in everybody's way;  
Bare blue and barren, and less beautiful  
Because no one had ever thought to say?

He tramped his inward rage, not seeing where  
Elba lies waiting, on a rainy day,  
Not noticing the sweetness of the breeze;  
He only knew that he must get away

To where in valleys rivers always run  
And over every hill is not the sea:  
Always the golden island of his mind  
Shaping sun-courses for the years to be.

Here no one ever had done anything,  
In the sea-distance actions were all signed:  
Soon his ambitions were as limitless  
As possibilities were here confined:



There on the hidden mainland, in the world,  
Reality could give to thought that seems  
Fantastic, all its substance and its scale :  
The pirates' island nursed an Emperor's dreams.

Where now in every street his name is proud  
And brazen victories on café walls,  
Was simply birthplace, without pride or love  
A claim of earth ; if Paris spurned his palls  
As it had him, then he would come back dead  
To where his absences had failed to change  
The timeless hours from which his youth had fled ;  
Deeds now so famous, all they mean, still strange.

The lives of places did not speak to him  
Who listened to the loud commanding voices  
Imprisoned in his mind ; so now in all  
Such prisoned isles the exiled shade rejoices

To live wherever Icarus-climbing pride  
Harbours his thoughts in wonder, and is dumb ;  
Memory has no home, and nor has he  
Who never once looked back the way he'd come.

Only, some evenings when the clouds wept westwards  
In shadows on the sea, his thoughts might meet  
A bitter cistus breath from barren dreams  
Trampled by his own hot and hurrying feet.

Bells fall from the sky  
Time cannot fly  
And on an island all ambitions die.

## EDWIN BROCK

### *• Three sonnets to my Mother*

#### I

“I WENT to dances when I carried you . . .  
“your father charlestoned like a movie star . . .  
“six months’ gone I was before they knew . . .  
“my skirts were short and I wore shingled hair. . . .”

Thus my mother leads me curling back  
in confidence in quiet afternoons  
along a past that history has cracked  
and cul-de-sac-ed in four unfurnished rooms  
and twenty years have heard the words again  
in lieu of any other liturgy  
in plainsong that is neither song nor plain  
but evidence of that reality  
in which, for six short months, my mother lives  
her prayer: that God repents what she forgives.

#### II

Holding the candle to the devil, you  
discovered that his horns were halo-tipped  
and that his eyes were of the deepest blue  
which was the lonely sea where you had shipped  
yourself, convinced that this was your life’s cry;  
it was a small mistake that you had made,  
for any sea’s as blue as any eye  
and any devil fair as any maid.



Yours was the bed you made in which you lie,  
yours the pillow stuffed ungratefully,  
yours the darkest cloud, which was the sky  
between the devil and the deep blue sea

and I am lonely, wishing I could give  
more than pity, more than boyhood love.

### III

Yours should have been a life of wedding bells  
and dancing to the songs that were the rage  
with midnight held away by fairy spells  
and dream beginnings drawn on every page.

It was the wrong tale that your days were spun in,  
told by words that should have been unsaid,  
for you were cast by malice out of boredom  
with every chapter headed by the dead ;

And now it is too late to change the ending,  
already written where we have begun,  
already where the cast is seen assembling  
the shadows fall on mother, father, son,

and I pray that there may be a new beginning—  
I pray you: God have mercy everyone.

TOM MALCOLM

### *Keepsake*

PRESS the rose in the book  
and you have neither a flower  
nor a volume,  
you have a ghost  
and a graveyard.

## W. PRICE TURNER

### *A Tract for Catharists*

OLD age cries at the beauty of innocence:  
the thorns in her hair, the whirlpools of her eyes;  
while adolescence sighs for experience,  
and who wants wisdom, if old age is wise?  
I don't know what I want when I'm on fire,  
embrangled in all the auras of desire.

I woke the phoenix once, the touchiest bird,  
his blue paper tail had smouldered all the night,  
and then he retired in heat without a word.  
I swear he must have been consumed by spite  
to permutate himself a compound pyre  
of all the embrangled auras in desire.

If after ten years of marriage we deplore  
there is no way we have not tried before,  
our marital rites become a kind of chore.  
Nobody tries to seduce us any more.  
In dreams we yearn, and snoringly admire  
the auras of all embrangled in desire.

Pity the ragnail strummer, plucking quick wire  
till one chord pacifies the twisted lyre,  
for the will to master and the need to serve  
give that old boomerang desire its swerve.  
Unaware ones never shiver the entire  
auras embrangled in all of the desire.

Desire of the auras embrangled in all  
the arrows that quiver within the flesh,  
keeps different mirrors on every wall  
angled to deepen as the vantage narrows,  
with a vigorous prism, a tangled mesh,  
wish-fledged visions mingled in soaring choir,



all of desire in the embrangled auras  
where one sees Thanatos—another, Eros.  
Cackling fancies fade the passion warped in ire.  
Where are the morals of other eras?  
*Burning and turning in the widening gyre*  
of all the auras embrangled in desire.

## MAUREEN DUFFY

### *The Conductor*

THE ungainly fat old man levers himself,  
Arms swinging the huge slack body,  
Onto the rostrum, lifts his stick, taps,  
Music breaks into the breathless air.  
Instruments are poised, a pause, then with a sweep  
He dances then, rocks the great sack of flesh;  
His arms draw water and undulating light,  
Leaves moved by summer winds, swans  
Dipping and singing on a northern lake  
In an archaic gloom; the white fingers  
Etch a phrase, pluck out a sob or trill  
A chuckle and the white head sways  
In time. He is of the giants,  
The grand old man rewarding us with his lollipops  
Of bright sound, poking at our pomposity  
Barbed fingers of fun. I who prefer  
The brittle notes of Bach, mice scamper of harpsichord  
In a drawing room, pay him this homage  
Of a heart wrung by the falling streams,  
Swayed by the winds like torn rags  
Of chestnut green in April.  
Eighty this year and he is younger than these.

FRANK ALCOCK

*No Longer One Long Death*

NO longer one long death alone  
Will lock your ocean heart in stone,  
When I, like a flash in the night of your thigh,  
Blast my seed to star the sky  
And plunge my hair in the seas of your sigh  
No longer cold as dawn bone.

No summer sun will starve your bowl  
With crusts you yield, bread you load,  
For I will hang every rag on a lie  
As wild as a poppy, bright as rye,  
And naked I will dance and naked cry  
For you my summer fruit will hold.

If rock shocks your tensed bone,  
Known to plough when nerves are sown,  
I, in a slender root of the vine,  
Will sip a dewlike light of the wine  
To flower pain as white as mine,  
When rock shocks your tensed bone.

No more will your scythe swing to and fro,  
Or your strength at noon burn so low,  
When you in my deep green fields lie,  
Or over the hills when the wind is high  
Stride to a rhythm of sheaves and sky  
Reaped when my scythe swings low.

No wanton lover will lure you home  
To smooth your hair with his golden comb,  
For you will lie in my bed of lime  
And by my hands the hours chime  
And lithe like gods our bodies rhyme  
A word for love no love has known.



Though you embowel my sun in stone  
And drive your plough where my seed is sown,  
I will flame as a poppy, rage as rye,  
And over the hills when the wind is high  
Leap naked and dance, and naked die  
My one long death alone.

## FELIX ANSELM

### *Departure*

THE story, I suspect, is told wrong.  
The happy couple, tired of lolling  
under serene unforbidden trees, longed  
for the rich roaring frolicking rocking and rolling  
wicked city. They were not kicked out, they left  
laughing. Nothing but wholesomeness tastes stale,  
but one rotten apple in the basket smells  
delicious. Of course, the rift  
remained, the nostalgia for the womb.  
But look at the young, how the deep cleft  
entices them, how eager they are to climb  
the steep summits, how they give all  
their cloying summers for one joyously raw fall. . . .

U.S.A.

## MARGARET STANLEY-WRENCH

### *The Strangers*

**B**EFORE the skirmish, the dance of love and hate  
They looked out over the rim, the narrow coffin  
Of their separate sexes. Desire ran, sudden  
as a beetle.

Eyes were glossed with it, met and clenched  
like hands.

All the air was glittering, crystalline, tingling  
With a dazzled splendour. Trees spawned,  
sudden abundance

Brimmed over every bush, seed and semen  
And the burgeoning, the hope, the charging  
of the universe

As hand trembled in hand, the nervous, febrile  
Shell of his on hers, rounded, with pale  
As mushroom skin and the petalled, magnolia flesh,  
Probing, as if already the minds dared  
What bodies feared yet longed for. Now no barrier  
Held one from the other. Loneliness had ended.

And then the shadow. The hard and narrow prison  
Was hammered home, each in a cell of bone  
Lay separate and trapped. There was no contact.  
She, shut in the dark, soft anguished velvet of tears  
Knew the heart is a lioness who rages  
Uncaged and yearning, a female beast, not tamed.  
And he, the emery of grief as dry and rasping  
As an east wind of drought, shrank into silence,  
Dreading a breath to pierce the growing rind  
Of thick and lizard skin that made him blind.

Locked in their narrow cells, and more alone  
Now for the momentary touch of hands,  
The gazing into the strangeness of another's country,



Dank rides and silences, haunting, stretching beyond  
The darkness of the eyes, the shallowness of looking,  
They lay and faced the inward desperation,  
Aliens, whose only language is the blunted  
Reaching out of the body, dumb and thwarted,  
Whilst the spirit cries for the light beyond, beyond.

J. R. HOWELL

*Northumberland Coast*

WHERE the green irony of water  
plucks without prayer the sharp  
loss of a gull's white ending,  
may no pale majesty of cliff  
effect salvation.

It is not safe to know;  
where the slow tide's re-iteration  
blinds the sense, in what grey altitude  
of hope, sounds cold the threnody  
for a sea-spending.

## REVIEWS

*Cypress and Acacia*: Vernon Watkins (Faber, 12s. 6d.).

*The Prodigal Son*: James Kirkup (O.U.P., 15s.).

*Guy Fawkes Night*: John Press (O.U.P., 12s. 6d.).

THE latest volume by Mr. Vernon Watkins is indisputably the work of a master craftsman dedicated to his art; but if one can hardly fail to recognise and appreciate the artistry of these poems, one is seldom moved by them. Perhaps the standard set by Mr. Watkins's previous volumes leads us to expect too much—for there is a great deal to admire in this collection, judged on its own merits—or it may be that the poet is at present undergoing a period of transition, to break out later into a new line of development which will surprise us all. Whatever the reason, *Cypress and Acacia*, despite its technical competence, seems to me to lack the compulsion of *The Death Bell* which preceded it five years ago, though some of the separate poems such as *The Exacting Ghost*, *The Immortal in Nature*, *In the Protestant Cemetery, Rome*, *Swedenborg's Skull*, and *Call it All Names, But Do Not Call it Rest*—

"Here where through trees death's voice, all-severing, blows,  
Hung with stone tongues, the language of farewell,  
Great doors are opened which no hand can close  
And wide heaven flies into the bud's cold cell.  
So is her sickness her last oracle  
Where from its falling we may seed the rose  
And her new joy from her remembered sorrows  
Which time, being stony, has no tongue to tell."

exhibit the characteristic depth and insight. At his weakest Mr. Watkins has always been inclined to spread himself; this tendency towards wordiness is a little more in evidence than usual in this collection, especially in the pieces which appear to be drawn from literature rather than direct personal experience. Within the discipline of the shorter-line stanza, however, the language assumes crispness and vitality, and the poetry leaps suddenly to life.

"Clear night, great distances,  
Faith, like a pestle, drums  
Your baffling silences.  
Hard though the wintry crust,  
What truth has man but loaves?  
Bread will compel man's trust,

And not the starry groves :  
Wisdom is hid in crumbs."

Mr. Kirkup's poems may not be so ambitious as those of Mr. Watkins, but however slight his themes or superficial the experience with which he is concerned, they are always readable and almost always interesting. *The Prodigal Son*, with its variety and its swift changes of mood, shows Mr. Kirkup at his most versatile. Many of the poems might be classified as impressions, for they record the poet's reactions to countries he has visited during the last few years, amongst them Sweden, Spain and Japan. Such titles as *Swedish Exercises*, *Geisha Dancing*, *Snowfall on Matsushima*, *Festival Taurino: Ciudad Rodrigo* give the casual reader an idea what these poems are about, but they give no hint of the accurate observation, the keenness of the eye and the liveliness of the imagination which went to the making of the poems.

In *The Prodigal Son* there are to be found Mr. Kirkup's usual crop of poems on unusual subjects—*In a Sailplane*, *Tea in a Space-Ship*, *The Body Builder*, *All-In Wrestlers* and *Earthquake*—none of which go very deeply into the subject, but all of which rouse and hold one's interest. In many of these poems the poet indulges his sense of humour; sometimes a little too facilely, as in *Tea in a Space-Ship*—

"The tea, which never would grow cold,  
Gathers itself into a wet and steaming ball,  
And hurls its liquid molecules at anybody's head,  
Or dances, eternal bilboquet,  
In and out of the suspended cups up-  
Ended in the weightless hands  
Of chronically nervous jerks  
Who yet would never spill a drop,  
Their mouths agape for passing cakes."

or, with more effect, as a general attitude to life.

Mr. John Press has a sense of humour, too, as well as a taste for satire, exemplified by *The Master*:

"And in the Senior Common Room,  
In accents of unrivalled gloom,  
Draining his third glass, will deplore  
The selfish vices of the poor,  
Who nowadays have lost the sense  
Of a directing Providence  
Which set in their due place the spheres,  
The slums, the Bishops and the Press. . . ."



It is true that in such pieces Mr. Press usually attacks the obvious, and the force of his attack is weakened by the fact that most of his targets are no longer very relevant to the age or are so generally condemned by consensus of opinion as to be hardly worth the effort of pillorising them. *Guy Fawkes Night* is another lightweight collection and, like Mr. Kirkup's, it is both unpretentious and enjoyable; unlike Mr. Kirkup's, it also contains a number of poems worthy of more serious attention. *Womanisers, The Betrayers* (awarded first prize at the Cheltenham Literary Festival in 1958), *January and May, February Sun*, and the title-poem itself—

“Yet if the figure on the pyre  
Were scorching flesh and cracking bone,  
If these brisk masters striding round  
Were executioners, the sound  
Of cheerful schoolboy-songs would turn  
Into a holy antiphon,  
And when a victim's trussed to burn  
A pious hand is always found  
To fling a faggot on the fire.”

reveal Mr. Press's true potentialities. Let us hope that in future collections he will give us more poems of this calibre and fewer of the insubstantial and slight pieces on which he appears to be wasting both his craftsmanship and very genuine talent.

CHRISTOPHER MORGAN.

*The Brompton Poets*: edited by Zorika Greene, 15s.

THIS is not the anthology of a new school or movement, as might well be thought in these days of schools and movements, but a collection of work by the members of the Brompton Centre of the Poetry Society. Indeed, the work of these poets is so refreshingly varied that it would be difficult to formulate any theory or devise a manifesto to which they could all subscribe. The Editor has justifiably given most space to Paul Greene and Carla Lanyon Lanyon, for they are, without doubt, the most competent contributors and their poems stand out in this collection. Nevertheless, the single poem by Roger Collis, *To a Partisan*, is both moving and unpretentious: I should have welcomed more of his work. John Sims, appearing in print for the first time, already has a mature style, and has the courage to tackle a *Public Execution* (of Ronald Marwood) without moralising or sentimentalising. Paul Greene has a most unusual sequence on *The Spectrum* and his *The Castaway* is one of the best poems in the volume, sharing honours with Carla Lanyon Lanyon's *A Father*. The mystical element is provided by Ross Macauley, though this poet also has a poem featuring a prison-breaker. Michael Hatwell's *A Frieze for Dionysus* is more down-to-earth than its somewhat academic title might suggest; and I particularly liked his translation from Cecco Angiolieri. On the whole this is a stimulating collection, and the Brompton Group is to be congratulated on its enterprise.

MARGARET KING.

*The Heart's Variety*: Kathrine Sorley Walker (Mitre Press, 6s.).

*Out of Solitude*: R. Cynewulf Robbins (Centaur Press, 7s. 6d.).

*The Cruising Auk*: George Johnston (O.U.P., 20s.).

*The Dead Before Dead*: W. T. Andrews (Centaur Press, 7s. 6d.).

*First and Second Love*: Eleanor Farjeon (O.U.P., 10s. 6d.).

YOUNG and otherwise immature poets may learn valuable lessons from the five books of verse here reviewed, if they will go to the trouble of reading them. Kathrine Sorley Walker's heart's variety consists of love, mourning, memory, meditation, faith and joy. Her competence as a poet is marred by hidden quotations (possibly unconscious), lady-like moralising, weak rhythms and cadences, an underlining of the obvious, and a certain posturing. Her sincerity is not in question, nor her desire to set down her thoughts directly and clearly. There is light, there is beauty, but there is no fire.

Mr. Robbins, a Canadian who works in television and served in the Royal Navy during the last War, is much alive to the predicaments of the modern world. At times the involved counterpoint of events leads him to escape into fantasies such as *Christmas in the Asylum* in which the various details are not fused into a complete whole; and at times his verse lacks true discipline, leading to lines like "Sails I need with bellies big" and "Slime-blood oozed youth". He scorns finely many widely-held shallow views of our time, and his anger is clean and wholesome; but he has not yet come to the vital stage of pondering the use and value of every word. Among much that is solid worth, there remains a deal of unresolved casualness.

Canadian Professor George Johnston is acclaimed as a "truly comic writer". Humour is obvious in most of these poems, yet their outstanding appeal is from their well-disciplined neatness of diction and clean exactness of technique, which lend point to the humour. His vocabulary is large and rich, his images and metaphors delightful, his observation unmaliciously sly, his characters splendidly human. How pleasant to know Mr. Murple, Aunt McGonigle, old Mrs. McWhirter, Miss Knit, Mr. Byers, and Mary bloody Jane. God bless the alderman's stomach : and let us think again of Elaine in her bikini—

"While the incalculable strings gather in  
What's hers to gather in."

Mr. Andrews is concerned with basic matters and has no time for fripperies. "The dead before dead" are the lepers, and in this pointed metaphorical display he combines Father Damien's exploits in Molokai with experiences of Pierre Clostermann the fighter-pilot, ending with St. Exupery's conclusion that "we are the playthings of universal incoherence". Anger and sarcasm, satire and pungent understatement serve to enrich the bare meaningful lines with undertones of violent protest. This is strong and well-made verse in which every word has been accounted for and meant, not difficult to read, uncomfortable and stark, uncompromising and keen. Its impact is immediate and vivid. It should be read particularly by those of easy optimism and the thick-skinned I'm-all-righters.

Miss Farjeon's reprinted collection of forty-four sonnets, divided into sections of thirteen to the first love, an interim of seventeen, and fourteen to Edward Thomas, is sure of readers and appreciators now and in the future. Not intended for publication when written between 1911 and Thomas's wasteful death in 1917, they lay unseen for thirty years until she wished to see them in



print in her lifetime rather than leave them to the risk of casual posterity. The 1947 edition proved their worth, and now they are made more widely available. Their diction is at times dated by the use of "ye", "thou", "wind" (with the long "i"), and so on, and yet the sense is honest and straightforward—

"I have looked my weakness straight between the eyes

And called it by no other name than ill . . .  
the thought is clear, unimpeded, tranquil even in those "bloodshot years"—

"For silence utters in a perfect trust

Things that we blur and spoil with difficult speech. . . ."

and everywhere there is a feeling for the bones of truth underneath the labelled flesh—

"The soul has premonitions of its fire,  
And dizzy for the star of its desire  
Mistakes for spirit-flame the earthly heats."

This is a valuable and devoted book, probably more useful for our age than were Mrs. Browning's sonnets for hers.

HUGH CREIGHTON HILL.

*The Walled Garden*: Muriel Grainger, 3s. 6d.

*Shadow Pantomime*: Rosemary Bazley. 3s. 6d.

*Angel-Faced Shall the Rain*: Pamela Stephenson.  
3s.

*Poems in Transit*: David Tipton. 3s.

*A View of the Town*: J. W. Tatum. 3s.

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Publications

FEW of the poems in *The Walled Garden* consist of more than 16 lines, but it is surprising just how much the author manages to say in her deceptively easy style. Miss Grainger is a skilled craftsman, and in choosing to confine herself to lyrics she obviously knows how to make the most of her gifts. Her usual method is to concentrate upon a single image—a rose, a bird, a young girl, a mirror, or the turning tide—and without sentimentalising or spoiling the original purity of vision in any way, to allow the image to crystallize into the poem itself, revealing its various facets like a precious stone and, more often than not, drawing an implicit parallel with some aspect of human experience. Moreover, she uses this

method with most striking effect where others would be found overstating an emotion or overstressing a moral. Miss Grainger has a keen eye and ear, and if she derives much of her material from nature, she is, nevertheless, extremely selective.

*Shadow Pantomime* is a pleasing collection of poems of uneven quality, and contains some free translations from Heine, Rilke and von Eichendorff. The range of subject varies from a consideration of the prospects of civilisation in this atomic age to a slight piece on the garden snail with his "mild myopic telescopic/Love-'em-and-leave-'em eyes", which seems strangely out of place amongst the more serious poems. In such poems as *Circus*, *Winter*, *The Farmstead* and the title-poem, and in a few odd lines here and there, Mrs. Bazley demonstrates her abilities, but too often she is content with work on a lower plane altogether, possibly because her feelings have not been involved.

Miss Pamela Stephenson has an obvious love of words for their own sake, and the courage to experiment with syntax. At her best she can charm by her exuberance and by her original way of expressing herself, but she frequently spoils the effect by vagueness or imprecision, or by a phrase or two which strikes the reader as being slightly out of key.

*Poems in Transit* is a collection of realistic poems recording the author's impressions of Malaya, France and Spain; or, in quite a different sense, of poems written during the transition between one way of life and another. Neither romantic nor nostalgic, Mr. Tipton adopts what might be described as a journalistic approach and holds nothing back. He accepts the scene without commenting upon it and paints it as vividly as he sees it, with every detail included—the army latrines as well as the minarets and temples; the V.D. patients as well as the sarong-clad Malay woman; the sweat, vomit, and excrement as well as the mountains shrouded in mist and the dolphin at play in the Red Sea. One feels that he is, at the moment, more interested in getting the details into the picture than in the means of presentation, but this is largely the result of writing before assimilating his experiences as a serviceman, a fault which he should have no difficulty in correcting.

Whilst Mr. Tipton is intent upon depicting life exactly as it is, taking the squalor and the splendour in his stride almost without question, Mr. Tatum seeks a pattern of values and endeavours to establish his own identity with that pattern. Preoccupied as he is in *A View of the Town* with man's inner fears and basic loneliness, he sees life in contradictory terms—as "a giant backyard, of broken



spars and boxes" or "a smudge of paint on a canvas" or "a coming to terms with existence"—and seizes desperately upon odd points of contract with his fellows, the laugh of a child, a girl alighting from a bus, or a voice which detaches itself from the general hubbub of conversation. Projecting his own feelings upon the external "timelost world, isolated, obeying always its own rules", he is filled with the kind of doubt and questionings which usually precede the acceptance of a religious faith or the working out of a personal philosophy for living; but as yet, like many other poets, he discovers meaning and emotional security only in the love-relationship between man and woman.

Undoubtedly, Mr. Tatum's intellectual and spiritual powers are far in advance of his development as a poet, but when he has acquired the necessary technique and achieved the appropriate style to deal with his problems, his concern with fundamentals should provide the stimulus for some first-rate poetry.

WALTER CARROLL.



## NOTICES

**YOUTH CLUB ACTIVITIES.** A mixed Youth Club with headquarters in South London is forming a Literary Group which it is hoped will help prospective writers, and which will produce its own magazine (publishing verse, stories, essays, criticism, reportage, etc.) as a means to this end. Young men and women (under the age of 21) who live in South London, and who are interested in helping with or taking part in this experiment, are invited to contact the Club Leader, Howard Sergeant, at 209 East Dulwich Grove, London, S.E.22.

**OUTPOSTS PUBLICATIONS.** The latest additions to the *Outposts Modern Poets Series* of booklets are: *Poems in Transit* by David Tipton, *A View of the Town* by J. W. Tatum, *Farrago* by D. J. Lockwood, and *A Whisper on the Wind* by Michael O'Higgins.

**THE HEADLANDS**, poems by Howard Sergeant (published by Putnam's) can be ordered through local booksellers or obtained from this address, price 8s. (including postage). "Those who despair of the aims and values of modern poetry should ponder Mr. Sergeant and think again."—*Contemporary Review*.

The Contemporary Poetry and Music Circle arranges readings by new as well as established poets of their recent work; and by critics, editors, and anthologists of verse that is particularly interesting them; on the second Monday of every month from October to May at 7 p.m. at 13 Prince of Wales Terrace, Kensington Road, W.8. The meetings are freely open to the public, but a collection is taken. Monthly programme and enquiries: Alec Craig, 4 Princes Court, Worsley Road, London, N.W.3.